

Report of the Standing Committee on Technology 2019

Work done by the Committee

The Bar website continues to perform satisfactorily.

The following enhancements have been added this year:-

1. Tightening of Security
 - a) When a member ceases practice, his/her user account will be suspended automatically.
 - b) When a pupil ceases to be a pupil, his/her pupil user account will be cancelled automatically.
 - c) It has come to our attention that there are fake websites of chambers. To avoid the Bar's website from being mimicked, additional programming has been done to prohibit the images on the website from being copied or downloaded.
 - d) SSL (Security Socket Layer) certificates have been installed on the Bar website and the membership system to establish an encrypted connection between a web browser / user's computer / servers and the website.
 - e) It has come to our attention that there has been occasionally very high traffic flow to the Bar website in the recent months. Two such incidents were reported in August 2019 that the website was temporarily suspended for 2 to 3 hours in the morning. We are now taking defensive measures and will continue to monitor the situation closely.
2. For better navigation, login button has been added to the top right corner of the website.
3. For provision of better service to our members, Special Offer Section has been added to the restricted Members' Area. Expired offers are offloaded automatically. Members may check from time to time if there are any special offers exclusively to the members of the Bar.

It is encouraging for us to see that members and pupils are making good use of online registration via the Bar website for enrollment of seminars and courses and application for YB Subsidies. As of December 2019, there are over 1,350 website user accounts created, and over 40 events / ALE courses / seminars / activities having registration done online. Some events even received over 100 online registrations; the system greatly eases the workload of the Bar Secretariat.

On the other hand, the Committee has also received briefing and provided feedbacks to the Judiciary Administrator on the Judiciary's Information Technology Strategy Plan.

Going Forward

The Committee, now tasked with overseeing both the Bar website and also Bar's IT matters in general, has started looking into integration of the Bar website and its membership database, as well as an update of the latter, a system that was built years ago with dated technology and thus limited capabilities.

It is hoped that once they are integrated the two currently separately maintained and used systems could better support each other, in particular in making and keeping records of courses taken by pupils and members, and in the future any point(s) they are required to collect on a regular basis.

In addition, it is also hoped that a new membership database system will offer more extensive administrative support by way of data field management and automation, thereby lessening the workload of the Bar Secretariat staff, which has been increasing along with growth of membership and the need for training provision.

At the moment the Committee has carried out an initial survey of the needs of the Bar Secretariat staff and also started sourcing potential contractors suitable for the integration project.

The simplified Chinese version of the website has been built but is still being proofread. It has taken much more time than we anticipated. There is an inherent shortcoming that the online Bar List cannot display members' profiles in simplified Chinese because the existing membership database does not have the data in simplified Chinese. That being the case, the simplified Chinese version of the website will be officially launched when there is total integration of the Bar's website and a new membership system.

Membership:

Martin Wong (Chairman)
Robin D'Souza (Vice Chairman)
Jeremy Chan
Richard Yip
Alan Chu
Kevin Woo
Jethro Pak.

The Committee is committed to provide members with more efficient services by using I.T. The Bar website will continue to be the platform for communication between the Bar and its members.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank all members of the Committee and the secretariat staff for their unfailing support.

Martin Wong
Chairman
Standing Committee on Technology

December 2019